

**Inspections Division**  
**of**  
**the Public Works Department**  
**of**  
**the City of Greenville**

[http://www.greenvillenc.gov/departments/public\\_works\\_dept/information/default.aspx?id=96](http://www.greenvillenc.gov/departments/public_works_dept/information/default.aspx?id=96)

*It is the goal of the Inspections Division to protect the safety and well-being of the citizens within the City of Greenville and its ETJ, and to support development by providing Building Permit Service and Enforcement of the North Carolina State Building Codes.*

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*Construction enforcement of the North Carolina State Building Codes and relative City of Greenville ordinances*

## **Simple Steps to Hiring a Contractor**

Every year, thousands of homeowners are taken advantage of by contractors who do not stay true to their word. We do not want you to suffer from this as a result of Hurricane Irene. By following these simple guidelines, you can prevent becoming a victim of this type of situation. Being able to make an informed decision about who you will hire as your contractor is of great importance.

***NOTE: Currently in North Carolina, an individual is permitted to do work up to \$30,000 without possessing a General Contractors License.***

### **Under \$30,000 - get references**

If your total construction cost for a particular job does not exceed \$30,000, focus your attention on obtaining several references from customers who have dealt with that particular contractor on a business level. Check references of contractor and the superintendent assigned to your job. "A contractor is no better than the superintendent on that job."

### **Over \$30,000 - get license information**

If the total construction cost does exceed \$30,000, require the contractor to supply license information, bonding information, and insurance information. Also check your contractor's references.

### **Obtain a detailed contract**

Be sure that there is a detailed contract explaining all work to be performed and that you receive a copy of the contract to keep for your records.

Be sure that you understand all of the information in the contract. If something is unclear to you, be sure it is fully explained to your satisfaction before any contract is signed.

If a down payment is given to the contractor prior to the beginning of any work, be sure to document this information and make certain that you receive a receipt showing the details of what amount has been paid and what amount will be due upon completion of all work to your satisfaction.

### **Get several estimates - shop around**

Be prepared to get several estimates from qualified contractors. Do not limit yourself to the services of one contractor. Shop around until you are comfortable to make a decision. Be sure there is a completion date as to when the proposed work will be finished. Many times this is left out of the contract and the work may have a tendency to get dragged out longer than needed.

## **A Benefit to Your Project**

You may think a building permit is just another bureaucratic hoop to jump through, but obtaining a building permit will actually benefit your project in several ways.

### **Obtaining the necessary permits will:**

1. Ensure that your project is safe and up-to-code.
2. Save money in the long run by making sure your contractor is licensed by the state and gets the proper permits.
3. Ensure approval of loans by many mortgage companies that require code compliance checks before approving loans. (Because more lenders are requiring permits, more non-permitted work is being discovered. When that happens, owners are required to expose framing, electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems so the requisite inspections can be performed. This can be costly and upsetting for owners.) Beware of contractors who recommend not obtaining permits. They may tell you it will delay the job or increase property taxes, but the truth is you are the only person to lose when you fail to get a permit. Contractors who don't want you to get a permit may not be licensed and may not have the knowledge to build in compliance with the code. When the contractor is paid and gone, you are the one responsible for any problems.

### **Examples of work requiring permits:**

- Work that exceeds \$5,000 (not including yard cleanup)
- Water damage that cause structural or insulation damage would need a permit,
- Any addition, repair, or replacement of load-bearing structures
- Replacing and reconnecting furnaces, A/C units
- Sub-floor repairs
- Addition to or change in the design of the plumbing system
- Repair or replacement of electrical components or system
- Replacement of more than 1 square of shingles
- Decks, carports, or garages repairs
- Etc..... Please call us if you have questions

\*\*\*\*\* Engineer evaluations may be needed for structures that suffered extensive damage from trees falling on them to ensure structural stability of foundations and other components.

### **What can be done without a permit?**

Permits are not required for minor repairs that do not include structural components or general work less than \$5000.00

General work does not include:

- Painting
- Carpet
- Other cosmetic type items
- Water damage that does not cause structural or insulation damage would not need a permit.